

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 25, 1966

Dear John:

I very much appreciated your thoughtful letter of March 15 in which you express the concern of yourself and other members of the Subcommittee regarding the adequacy of the 1967 budget for the National Institutes of Health. I fully recognize the strength of your convictions and the sincerity of your views. Accept my assurance that they have had my personal and lengthy consideration.

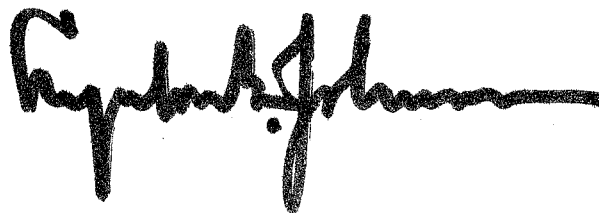
For many months now we have had the Federal budget under constant review. Only the other day I talked at length with the Mayors and later with the heads of all departments and the major Federal independent agencies about the economic situation of the country and the need to practice restraint and make sure that we spend only that which we must spend. During our budget reviews last November and December we strove to provide to the Congress a budget which would meet our international commitments, and would also permit us to press confidently forward toward the Great Society. I did not want to stop progress on any front, but it was clear that we could not meet all our goals at one time. Therefore, with the greatest reluctance, I found it necessary to request the Congress for a slower rate of advance in many programs than I would have liked. I still believe that our choices were right.

Yet in our Great Society programs -- health, labor, training, education, war on poverty, housing and community development -- the 1967 budget proposed administrative budget expenditures of \$12.9 billion, an increase from 1964 of \$6.2 billion. Exclusive of added Viet Nam costs and unavoidable interest payments, all other budget expenditures were cut back by \$3.7 billion between 1964 and 1967.

I found the budget choices particularly difficult in the field of health, for as you know, I am personally dedicated to the need for the highest quality of medical care for all Americans. Taking all Federal programs into account, including trust fund payments for Medicare, Federal health expenditures rise from \$5.1 billion in 1964 to \$10.3 billion in 1967. The NIH expenditures are more than 10% of these total health expenditures.

I share your view that the budget for NIH does not propose to do all the researchers -- or you and I -- would like to see done in 1967. But for all NIH except construction the budget increase of \$93.5 million is the largest single increase for NIH proposed by a President in his January budget. No Institute was cut below 1966, funds are requested for all newly authorized programs, and as explained in the budget document, funds for an artificial heart will be requested if important new breakthroughs occur. The amounts requested for health research construction will be channeled to new medical schools so that no delay will occur in their planned progress toward expanding our enrollment of medical students.

Reasonable men may differ when these difficult choices are made. I understand the positive sentiments which motivate your statement of views, and after you have considered the balance which must be maintained in our economy and among our Great Society programs I know that you will decide in terms of what you think is the best national interest.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lyndon B. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Honorable John E. Fogarty
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.